

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
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S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)
H - MISS FOLGER (INFO)
EUR/P - MR. JERABEK
IO/P - MR. BLACHLY
NEA/ARN - MR. BULLEN
AF/P - MRS.RUSSELL

----- 081426

R 242159Z MAR 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANAA
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USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
CINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING MARCH 24, 1975:

QUOTE: Q. IN READING THE PAPERS I NOTICED THAT THERE HAVE
BEEN REPORTS THAT MR. KISSINGER'S MISSION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST WAS HAMPERED BECAUSE OF THE ISRAELIS DOUBT OF THE
WILLINGNESS OR THE ABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES TO BACK UP
COMMITMENTS -- BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON IN INDOCHINA.

I RECALL IN 1965, WE EQUATED THE DEFENSE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO NATO -- AND NEVER COULD GET OUT --
ALMOST. AND I AM WONDERING IF YOU CAN ANSWER THIS QUESTION:

DOES THE DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
AND THE RELUCTANCE OF CONGRESS TO PUT MORE MONEY INTO THAT
AFFAIR OUT THERE HAMPER THE SECRETARY IN HIS MIDEAST
NEGOTIATIONS?

A. WELL, LET ME JUST SAY ON BACKGROUND AS A GENERAL COM-
MENT HERE, THAT: DURING OUR TRIP, THE QUESTION OF THE
SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS RAISED, AND BY SOME OF THE
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PARTIES THAT THE SECRETARY TALKED TO -- AND THEY ARE AWARE
OF THE DETERIORATING SITUATION THERE.

BUT I WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT THIS HAD ANY
DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO THE SECRETARY'S TALKS WITH THE
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE AS YOU KNOW FROM THE STATEMENT
THAT WAS MADE IN JERUSALEM TWO NIGHTS AGO I BELIEVE IT WAS,
-- BOTH SIDES MADE A VERY SERIOUS EFFORT -- BUT UNFORTUNATE
LY THERE WAS SOME DIFFERENCES THAT JUST COULDN'T BE
RECONCILED. BUT I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS IS WHAT THEY WERE
FOCUSSED ON. WHAT THE PARTIES WERE FOCUSSED ON WERE THE
ISSUES, THE KEY ISSUES AT HAND IN TRYING TO TAKE THIS
FURTHER INTERIM STEP.

AND SO I WOULD NOT WEAVE IN THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN A DIRECT WAY TO THE RESULTS OF THE MISSION.

Q. WE ARE GETTING REPORTS FROM STAFF AIDES ON THE HILL THAT THE SECRETARY TOLD CONGRESSMEN THIS MORNING THAT THE U.S. WAS GOING TO REEXAMINE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL.

A. ON THIS -- THIS REFERS, OBVIOUSLY, TO THE MEETING WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AT THE WHITE HOUSE THIS MORNING. A QUITE EXTENSIVE READOUT ON THIS MEETING HAS BEEN -- IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN -- PUT OUT BY NOW BY MR. NESSEN.

THE ONLY THING THAT I WOULD LIKE TO CORRECT IS THAT THE PRESIDENT INDICATED THAT THERE WOULD BE A REVIEW OF OUR POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE DIDN'T SAY "ASSESS OUR POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL." IT WAS A MORE GENERAL STATEMENT. BUT I WILL TRY AND GET YOU THE ACTUAL TEXT AS NESSEN GAVE IT OUT.

Q. IS IT CORRECT THAT THE PRESIDENT, THROUGH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DELIVERED A VERY STRONG MESSAGE TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT?

A. WELL I HAVE SEEN -- I KNOW WHAT MR. NESSEN SAID YESTERDAY. AND I ASSUME YOU ALL KNOW WHAT PRIME MINISTER RABIN SAID IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN JERUSALEM. AND AS THE UNCLASSIFIED

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WHITE HOUSE HAS SAID -- AND I'LL SAY IT HERE -- YOU KNOW WE DON'T OBVIOUSLY, RELEASE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES LIKE THIS. BUT JUST LET ME MAKE THIS ONE POINT: THAT THERE WAS NO THREAT HERE TO ISRAEL AT ALL-- AND I'LL JUST LEAVE IT THERE.

Q. WAS THERE ALSO A COMMUNICATION TO THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. LET ME CHECK AND FIND OUT.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I SUPPOSE YOU OUGHT TO ASK THE WHITE HOUSE, BECAUSE AFTER ALL IF THERE WAS ONE, I ASSUME IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. BUT I WILL BE GLAD TO LOOK --

INCIDENTALLY, LET ME GO BACK TO LARS' COMMENT FOR ONE MINUTE, BECAUSE I HAVE THE WORDING, WHICH I THINK IS IMPORTANT. THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOW REEXAMINE THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION -- AND THEN WILL KEEP CONGRESS FULLY INFORMED.

THIS WAS THE INFORMATION I GOT BEFORE MR. NESSEN'S BRIEFING, BUT YOU CAN DOUBLE CHECK AND SEE JUST HOW IT CAME OUT.

Q. ON THE QUESTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF THIS NOTE WHICH YOU TALKED ABOUT AS BEING "NO THREAT" -- COULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THE LANGUAGE AS BEING HARSHLY WORDED, THOUGH, OR "STRONGLY WORDED?"

A. NO, NO, IT WASN'T THAT.

Q. WHAT WAS THE GIST OF THE NOTE, THEN?

A. AS I SAID BEFORE, KEN, YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL VERY FREQUENTLY. WE ARE NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF THE COMMUNICATION. PRIME MINISTER RABIN SAID THAT THEY WEREN'T GOING TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF IT, EITHER.

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Q. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A "REEXAMINATION" AND A "REASSESSMENT?" SINCE YOU SEEM TO BE MAKING YOUR CASE ON THE DIFFERENCE.

A. NO, I'M SORRY I WASN'T CLEAR.

LARS' QUESTION STARTED OUT, I BELIEVE, SAYING THAT THERE WAS GOING TO BE A -- AND I DON'T CARE WHETHER YOU SAY "REASSESSMENT" OR "REEXAMINATION" -- OF OUR POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL. I BELIEVE THAT WAS YOUR QUESTION.

Q. RIGHT, THAT IS THE POINT, THIS IS THE REPORT BEING PUT OUT ON THE HILL TODAY.

A. RIGHT.

AND I JUST WANTED TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WHAT THE PRESIDENT INDICATED WAS THAT THERE'S GOING TO BE A REEXAMINATION -- OR YOU CAN SAY REASSESSMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

Q. OF WHICH ISRAEL IS A PART.

A. OF WHICH ISRAEL IS A PART, YES.

Q. SO, IT DOESN'T INVALIDATE WHAT LARS RAISED IN HIS QUESTION, HIS COMMENT THAT IT WOULD BE A REEXAMINATION OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

A. IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT ISN'T JUST FOCUSING ON ONE COUNTRY, WHICH IS THE WAY THE QUESTION WAS FIRST POSED TO ME.

Q. BUT IS NOT EXCLUSIVE.

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. I MEAN, IT IS INCLUSIVE. ISRAEL IS PART OF THE RE-
EXAMINATION OF POLICY.

A. ABSOLUTELY, YES.

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Q. I AM UNCLEAR ABOUT THIS. ARE WE TALKING ABOUT AMERICAN
POLICY TOWARD THESE COUNTRIES THAT MAKE UP THE WHOLE OF
THE MIDDLE EAST, OR ARE WE TALKING ABOUT A REVIEW OF THE
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST? IS IT A REVIEW OF OUR POLICY
TOWARD THE COUNTRIES, OR IS IT A REVIEW OF OUR POLICY CON-
CERNING THE WHOLE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I THINK IT WILL BE BOTH, FRANKLY. I CAN'T TELL YOU --
YOU KNOW, THERE WILL BE A -- YOU CAN SAY -- A REEXAMINATION
OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. AND THERE WILL BE A REAS-
SESSMENT OF U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST IN ALL ITS
ASPECTS. AND THEN YOU COULD ADD, TO BRING IN MARVIN'S
POINT, TOWARD ALL THE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA.

Q. TO LEAVE NO ROOM FOR MISUNDERSTANDING WHEN YOU SAY
"MIDDLE EAST SITUATION", ARE YOU REFERRING PRIMARILY TO
THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, OR ARE YOU REFERRING AS WELL TO
THE PERSIAN GULF, NORTH AFRICA, THE INTRA-ARAB DISPUTES,
IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN PART?

A. I CAN'T ANSWER IT WITH ANY GREAT DEGREE OF PRECISION.
I WOULD THINK THAT THE EMPHASIS ON THIS REEXAMINATION

OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. THAT WOULD
BE THE PRIMARY EMPHASIS. THIS IS MY OWN SPECULATION. I
THINK WE ALL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT COMES UP WHEN
PEOPLE SIT DOWN AND MAKE THE REASSESSMENT. I DON'T WANT
TO PREJUDGE WHAT THEY MAY BE FOCUSING ON.

Q. THIS REASSESSMENT WOULD INCLUDE SUCH ISSUES AS AID,
WHICH IS CERTAINLY PART OF OUR POLICY.

Q. AND MILITARY SALES.

A. IT MIGHT. I HAVE NO TABLE OF CONTENTS. I DON'T THINK
ANY TABLE OF CONTENTS HAS BEEN DRAWN UP YET. I THINK THAT
WOULD BE AN ELEMENT IN IT.

Q. I AM LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THEN THAT THERE IS A
POSSIBILITY HERE THAT THE END OF THIS REVIEW COULD END UP
PERHAPS WITH A LACK, OR WITH A LESSENING, OF AMERICAN SUP-

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PORT, MILITARILY, ECONOMICALLY, AND PERHAPS POLITICALLY
FOR ISRAEL?

A. I DO NOT THINK THAT THAT WILL BE THE CASE. THE QUESTION OF AID, AS WELL AS ALL OTHER INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED IN RELATION TO OUR OVERALL OBJECTIVES. BUT IF YOU WANT TO -- THE IMPLICATION OF YOUR QUESTION IS, DOES THAT MEAN THAT AID TO ISRAEL WILL BE CUT OFF, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, THAT IS NOT AT ALL THE CASE.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US IF THIS REASSESSMENT OR REEXAMINATION HAS BEEN, OR WILL BE, FORMALIZED IN THE FORM OF A NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STUDY?

A. I CAN'T TELL YOU. I CAN'T TELL YOU AT THIS STAGE. I JUST DON'T KNOW.

Q. ONE MORE QUESTION IN CONNECTION WITH THE REAPPRAISAL OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, IS IT YOUR UNDERSTANDING THERE IS A SIMILAR REAPPRAISAL OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA SITUATION.

A. I AM NOT SURE THAT THERE IS ANY.

Q. YOU ARE NOT SURE OF THAT.

A. NO, I AM NOT. I WAS TOLD THAT MAYBE THIS INFORMATION CAME OUT ON FRIDAY WAS NOT ACCURATE, BUT I AM STILL TRYING TO CHECK IT. AND I AM TOLD THAT MR. NESSEN HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ON THAT, AND I WANT TO CHECK THAT.

Q. THE PRESIDENT USED THE WORD "STUDY" TWICE. IT IS

THERE IN THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW. ARE YOU SAYING THAT THAT IS NOT ACCURATE?

A. FRANKLY, WOULD YOU JUST LET ME CHECK INTO IT, BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN BACK LONG ENOUGH TO TOUCH EVERY SINGLE BASE IN WASHINGTON.

Q. THE NOTE THAT YOU SAID CONTAINED NO THREAT, WHEN WAS THAT SENT? WHICH ONE CONTAINED NO THREAT?

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A. WELL, THERE WAS A COMMUNICATION THAT PRIME MINISTER RABIN REFERRED TO. I DON'T KNOW THE EXACT DATE OF IT, LAST WEEK AT SOME POINT, BUT I DON'T KNOW THE EXACT DATE OF IT.

Q. BUT IT WAS ALSO SAID THAT THERE WAS A SERIES OF MES-
SAGES THAT WENT BACK AND FORTH. AND YOU WERE REFERRING
TO A PRESIDENTIAL NOTE THAT CONTAINED NO THREAT. I JUST
WANTED TO BE SURE WHICH ONE YOU HAD IN MIND.

A. WELL, I WASN'T PUTTING A TIME ELEMENT ON ANY OF THESE
COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF OUR COUNTRY AND
THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL. THEY ARE IN CONTACT WITH
EACHOTHER VERY FREQUENTLY. AND AS FOR THE LAST LETTER,
OR NOTE, AS YOU PUT IT, IT WAS SOME TIME LAST WEEK, BUT I
DO NOT HAVE THE SPECIFIC DATE IN FRONT OF ME.

Q. CAN I ASK YOU SPECIFICALLY, WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING INTO
THIS --

A. THIS IS TO GO BACK TO THE THING YOU WERE ASKING BEFORE?

A. NO, NO, IN CONNECTION WITH THIS -- THAT THE COMMUNI-
CATION THAT WAS SENT FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
BREAKDOWN OF DR. KISSINGER'S TALKS, THAT ONE, WHERE THE
STRONG LANGUAGE IS USED.

A. WELL, LET ME JUST LOOK IN AND SEE IF I CAN GIVE YOU
ANY MORE THAN I HAVE GIVEN YOU. I DOUBT IT WILL BE
ABLE TO, BECAUSE WE ARE NOT GOING TO GO INTO THE SUBSTANCE
OF IT.

Q. ONE THING I WANT TO BE SURE I HAVE YOU DOWN RIGHT ON,
AND I THINK IT WAS KEN WHO ASKED THE QUESTION, AS TO
WHETHER IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE U.S. REVIEW, REASSESSMENT,
OR WHATEVER IT IS, MIGHT END UP WITH A LESSENING OF AID TO
ISRAEL. AND YOU SAID THAT IS NOT AT ALL THE CASE. WHICH
LEADS ME TO ASK WHETHER YOU ARE IN EFFECT SAYING WHAT YOU
SEEM TO BE SAYING, THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE REVIEW SHOWS,

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ISRAEL WILL GET JUST AS MUCH AS SHE EVER DID.

A. I SEE. YOU ARE FOCUSING ON THE WORD "LESSENING."

Q. NO, I AM FOCUSING ON -- JUST TURNING THE THING AROUND,
EITHER WAY, YOU SEE, YOU CAN GO AT IT.

A. WELL, IN THE FIRST PLACE --

Q. ARE YOU PREJUDGING THE THING?

A. NO. OBVIOUSLY NO ONE IS PREJUDGING. AND AS I DID SAY,
THE QUESTION OF AID, AS WITH ALL OTHER INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS
OF OUR POLICY, IS GOING TO BE REVIEWED IN RELATION TO OUR
OVERALL OBJECTIVES IN THE AREA.

I WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT -- AND THERE HAVE BEEN SOME QUESTIONS ALONG THIS LINE THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED -- MIGHT THIS MEAN THAT AID TO ISRAEL WOULD BE CUT OFF. AND ON THAT I WAS VERY CATEGORIC, AND I SAID NOT AT ALL, NO.

BUT ON THE QUESTION OF THE LEVEL OF AID, ET CETERA, THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WILL GO THROUGH -- TO ANY OF THESE COUNTRIES -- WILL GO THROUGH THE NORMAL CONGRESSIONAL PROCESS. SO THERE IS NO QUESTION OF PREJUDGING.

Q. WELL, THE "LESSENING" WAS THE --.

A. I AGREE WITH YOU ON THE VERB "LESSENING."

Q. LET ME THROW TWO QUESTIONS AT YOU IN RELATION TO THIS. IT HAS TO BE PRESUMED THAT WHEN YOU REVIEW, YOU ARE CONSIDERING A CHANGE, OR NO CHANGE.

IS THIS CHANGE --- OR THERE MAY BE NO CHANGE -- IN RELATION TO WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO ACHIEVE SOME KIND OF SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST? IS THAT THE SPECIFIC PRIMARY PURPOSE OF IT?

AND A SECOND QUESTION. MECHANICALLY, WHO IS GOING TO DO THIS REVIEW, AND WHAT WILL HE OR THEY DO WITH IT WHEN THEY UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE FINISHED?

A. WELL, I WAS ASKED EARLIER BY OZZIE IF THIS WOULD BE AN NSC DOCUMENT. I SAID I DO NOT KNOW. I DO NOT KNOW AT THIS POINT, SPECIFICALLY, WHO IS GOING TO DO IT OR WHAT THE FORM IT IS GOING TO TAKE. I THINK IT IS PREMATURE TO GET INTO THAT. AND I WOULD RATHER, AT THIS STAGE, JUST LEAVE IT THE WAY I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU, AND THEN WE CAN

SEE HOW IT GOES ALONG.

Q. LET ME SEE IF I HAVE GOT THIS STRAIGHT. YOU ARE SAYING THAT THERE WON'T BE A CUT-OFF OF AID TO ISRAEL, BUT YOU SAY IT MAY BE POSSIBLE THAT THERE COULD BE LESS AID TO ISRAEL IN THE FUTURE AFTER THIS REASSESSMENT IS MADE. IS THAT POSSIBLE?

A. NO. THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT WHAT I AM SAYING HERE AT ALL. THE QUESTION OF AID TO ANY COUNTRY EVERY YEAR COMES UP FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS. THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH GOES TO THE CONGRESS, AND THAT IS WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH REGARD TO THE FY-76 AID REQUEST, NOT ONLY FOR ISRAEL BUT EVERY OTHER COUNTRY. AND THERE IS NO POINT IN TRYING TO PREJUDGE ANYTHING, AS STEWART INDICATED

EARLIER.

Q. WHAT IS THE CURRENT U.S. POLICY REGARDING THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?

A. NUMBER ONE, WE HAVE NEVER BEEN AGAINST THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. WE WILL NOW, IN LIGHT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED, AWAIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. AND IF THE PARTIES WISH TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, OBVIOUSLY WE WON'T HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO IT.

IN THAT CONNECTION, I MIGHT REFER YOU TO WHAT FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMI OF EGYPT SAID IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, AND THAT WAS THAT HE INDICATED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD SOON BE IN CONTACT WITH THE COCHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. AS OF NOW, WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY COMMUNICATION ON THAT.

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Q. TO RETURN BACK TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, DO YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL MIGHT REFUSE TO ATTEND THE RECONVENED CONFERENCE?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT. I DON'T WANT TO SPECULATE ON THAT. I DON'T THINK THAT IS SOMETHING FOR ME TO ADDRESS MYSELF TO. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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